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**REMARKS BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA**

**16TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EMERGING
INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN THE PACIFIC RIM:
ANTIMICROBIAL DRUG RESISTANCE IN BACTERIAL AND
PARASITIC DISEASES**

**SASAKAWA AUDITORIUM, ICDDR,B
DHAKA
FEBRUARY 9, 2014**

Audience: 200 international medical experts and dignitaries

Media: No

Interpretation: No

Length of presentation: 5 minutes

Honorable Secretary Neazuddin, Bangladesh Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Cherished colleague the Ambassador of Japan Shiro Sadoshima

Dr. Aikichi Iwamoto, Institute of Medical Science, University of Tokyo, US-Japan Cooperative Medical Sciences Program

Dr. Patrick Brennan, Colorado State University, US-Japan Cooperative Medical Sciences Program

Good friend and partner Dr. John Clemens, Director of our host, icddr,b

... and all of you who, like me, seek a more healthy world.

Asalaam 'mlaikum and good morning.

This is a big room ... and it is filled with really, really smart people.

I speak not only of all the medical degrees and PhD's that you collectively hold ... there must be hundreds and hundreds of those here.

No ... I speak, too, of your collective wisdom in selecting Bangladesh as the venue for this important conference. I doubt that you could have chosen a better location.

When I first served in Bangladesh fifteen years ago, Bangladesh was known by some as one of the world's great cauldrons of disease. Certainly, my many ventures then around the country drove home clearly that disease, especially infectious disease, was rampant, as I witnessed hospital wards overflowing with sick patients, particularly children.

That era has now passed. Bangladesh is now on a solid trajectory to achieve by next year its millennium development goals for slashing mortality rates for both pregnant women and children under five. Bangladesh's inspiring success is exemplified by assessing the leading cause of death of children between the ages of one year and five years. I will give you a clue. It is not diarrheal disease; it is not respiratory disease; it is not malaria; it is not HIV/AIDS ... I know these killers well from either my earlier time here or my decades of service in southern Africa. But these are not the killers here of children between the ages of one and five. No ... the number one killer of these children is ... drowning ... as tragic as drowning is, it is vivid testimony of Bangladesh's success in fighting and beating back infectious disease.

Of course, as is always the case, such success did not just happen ... it was made to happen. Credit goes first and foremost to the Government of Bangladesh, which has given the health of its people highest priority. The latest evidence of this commitment is the massive immunization campaign that the government has launched with the support of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, now known as the GAVI Alliance, to immunize 52 million children against measles and rubella ... that's about a third of the nation's total population ... wow! ... go ahead ... be impressed!

Credit for this impressive progress against infectious disease goes, too, to Bangladesh's many partners, including most especially this wondrous institution, our gracious host, icddr,b, which has been and remains in the forefront of this never-ending battle.

I am pleased that America, too, has been a steadfast partner with Bangladesh in confronting disease. Here at icddr,b, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been partners for over 40 years, and this collaboration remains rich and strong as over 50 Bangladeshi scientists are now working on CDC-sponsored projects. America's partnership with icddr,b seeks both to strengthen Bangladeshi surveillance for diseases ... there are about 15-20 outbreaks a year ... and to bolster Bangladesh's capacity to respond effectively to such outbreaks, thus enhancing global health security.

I hope I have not misled you into thinking that the war against infectious disease is over. Indeed not ... so many battle fronts ... traditional and emerging ... remain: nipah, cholera, avian influenza, influenza B, cutaneous anthrax, hepatitis, encephalitis, chikungunya, dengue, mass

sociogenic illness, among others. You'll be discussing some of these medical frontiers in the days ahead.

USAID is also deeply invested in improving health in Bangladesh, which is a focus country for President Obama's Global Health Initiative. USAID contributes importantly to Bangladesh's success in enabling Bangladeshis to have the family size they want, thus reducing fertility rates; USAID also is a key partner in improving maternal and child health and nutrition, and reducing TB prevalence and mortality.

So, I hope that I have succeeded in convincing you in how truly brilliant you are ... especially in choosing Bangladesh as the site for this critical conference.

I hope, too, that over coming days you will discover the magic that is Bangladesh ... I speak of the amazing people of this country ... people who truly are the most energetic, dynamic, creative, generous, gracious, entrepreneurial and resilient whom I have known during the nearly 45 years that I have been engaged in development work in one way or another around the world.

Before I close, I want to acknowledge as well the longstanding collaboration between America and Japan through the US-Japan Cooperative Medical Sciences Program, which has some important meetings of its own during the course of the conference.

I wish you ... all of you ... well as you undertake your deliberations in this conference to forge ever stronger partnerships to make the world a more healthy place.

Thank you.

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**As prepared for delivery*